

Jesus Christ Is Raised from the Dead

We now move to the Fourth Week, which contemplates the Resurrection of Christ. In the last weeks you have been called to withdraw and remain still, contemplating the suffering of your companion, Jesus. Now you should let joy fill your heart, let light and beauty touch your spirit. This is a time of celebration. Express this joy in your prayer, but try also to let this inner joy touch others in celebration. I have attached a page called *Entering the Joy of the Lord* that may help you to make the transition from sorrow to deep joy.

The grace you seek from God this week is to feel glad and rejoice because Jesus Christ who seemed taken away from you for your sake has risen in power and glory, so that He might remain with you forever, and so that the desires of your heart might be fully realized.

There are two points which St. Ignatius suggests we keep in mind as we contemplate the Risen Jesus:

First, the divinity of Christ, which was hidden in the Passion, is manifest in his risen presence. What does it mean that his divinity shines through his humanity?

Secondly, the Risen Jesus carries out the office of consolator. He consoles the way friends console one another.

You may wish to begin or end your contemplation with this prayer:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of Eternal Glory! Alleluia!

*Praise to you, victorious over death itself, rising again to share with me your victory!
Alleluia!*

*Praise to you, sending out your friends to share your work and to share your eternal
life! Alleluia!*

Praise to the Father, Son and Spirit! Alleluia! Amen!

Prayer Materials for the Week:**1. The Risen Jesus Goes to His Mother**

St. Ignatius tells us that we have no specific Scriptural evidence to suggest that Jesus appeared to his mother Mary after the resurrection. Still, given the great love of Mary and Jesus, it would be hard to imagine that he would not visit her as the Risen Son glorified by God. This makes so much sense to Ignatius, that in the Exercises, he asks us to contemplate this encounter first.

I suspect that this would be a very emotional and deeply joyful meeting. Imagine that you are in the house with Mary, and suddenly Jesus comes to her. Listen to what they say, see what they do, and let them share with you what they have experienced together. Let this contemplation become a colloquy, where you speak intimately with Mary and the Risen Christ, about your own consolation or concerns. I have attached a page, "The Risen Lord Goes to His Mother," which gives further suggestions for praying this contemplation.

2. Repetition: The Risen Jesus Goes to His Mother

3. The Empty Tomb and the Appearance to Peter (John 20:1-10; Luke 24:34)

Go with Peter and share with him about his confusion, remain with him as he meets the Risen Christ. End with a colloquy with Jesus.

4. The Beloved Disciple Believes (John 20:1-10)

Now take the same passage, but concentrate on the beloved disciple. He was the one who was so close to Christ at the Last Supper that he rested in his bosom (Jn.13:23) and received his mother Mary (Jn.19:27). Some say that the beloved disciple is John, but he is never named; perhaps, the beloved disciple is each one of us. At any rate, what would it mean to be so close to Jesus, to know him well enough, to recognize that he is risen just from the way the cloths are lying within the empty tomb?

Spend time considering how you believe in the Risen Jesus through seeing and contemplating the sign of life and love in your own day-to-day life and in the world around you.

5. Jesus Consoles Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)

Remain with Mary Magdalene in her experience. See how Jesus consoles her. Note that due to an ancient faulty translation, it is wrongly thought that Jesus told Mary, "Don't touch me." The correct translation is, "Don't keep touching me." Or "Don't cling to me." The presumption is that Jesus and Mary have embraced, and finally Jesus is saying that they need to end their embrace so that Jesus can complete his mission and ascend to the Father so the Spirit can be sent, and Mary can undertake her mission of telling the disciples. Do I ever want to remain in intimacy when I need to get on with my mission? End with a colloquy with Jesus.

6. Repetition or Summary of the Week

7. Prayer of Intimate Dwelling

Supplementary Meditative Reading:

Psalm 8 Song of Songs 2:8-14 I Corinthians 15:45-53 Colossians 1:15-20 Romans 6:4

ENTERING THE JOY OF THE LORD

- This may be the oldest bit of Christian hymnody we have:
Wake up, O sleeper
Wake from the dead
And Christ will shine upon you. (Eph. 5:14)
- The carpenter from Nazareth, the young wandering rabbi, the great gather of friends, had gone into everything dark, destructive, and broken in our humanity. He had “harrowed Hell.” And then He turned out to be infinitely more than any of his friends or enemies had imagined.
- In His humanness, he triumphed over death. He had embraced everything human without ever acting unfaithfully to His Father, to Himself, or to His friends. He had lived His life in uprightness and in joy. Now, He is confirmed eternally in His own joy-to be with the children of humankind.
- Jesus now lives in a human condition without any precedent. He lives without flaw, defect, or default, unthreatened by any infidelity or by any kind of ending. He lives this condition for others, for all other human beings. He has the tremendous happiness of sharing this new human condition with each one of us. He’s like an unimaginably rich man who spends all his time giving and giving, helping and helping. Only, Jesus Christ is God and will spend forever giving and helping.
- This is Jesus Christ who lives now. If you do not come to know Him both full of joy and exuberantly sharing His happiness, then you will not really know Him at all. You have asked in past days to know Jesus and to love Him and to follow where He goes. It is into fullness of life and complete human joy that He goes! If you do not follow Him into His joy, you will ultimately find it hard to believe that you are following Him at all.
- As you contemplate Jesus Christ risen from the dead, keep two things in mind: First, Jesus hid His divine qualities while the sinful made their attempt to destroy Him. Now, He manifests His divine qualities. But how does the Christ manifest His true self? Is it in ways that most of mankind expects? Does it limit or enhance the freedom of those around? Does Christ manifest His true self differently to different disciples?
- And the second thing to keep in mind: Jesus Christ comes to His friends for consolation. Their consolation, that is, and not His own, though He was the one who suffered horribly. Christ comes as the consoler.
- Here is the “work” of the fourth week. It is happy work, but requires effort. This prayer will move you far abroad into the entire world God is creating. There, you will find the one who creates you most intimately, too.

THE RISEN LORD GOES TO HIS MOTHER

St. Inigo de Loyola wrote in his book of the Exercises:

"The Resurrection of Christ our Lord-The First Apparition: First Point. He appeared to the Virgin Mary. Though this is not mentioned explicitly in the Scripture it must be considered as stated when Scripture says that He appeared to many others. For Scripture supposes that we have understanding, as it is written, 'Are you also without understanding?'"

- Remember, after asking the Lord to make you aware in His presence and offering to Him your time and your self, where this fits into salvation history. Jesus had died on the cross and His Spirit had gone down among the dead to declare the great Good News that they will rise on the day the Father has appointed. Then His Spirit returns to the tomb and inspirits His cold, battered flesh. Straightway, He goes to His mother, the Lady Mary.
- Imagine His coming to her.
- Stay to hear what they say, to see what they do, and to let them share with you what they experienced together. Consider, then, that Jesus Christ is God and mighty Lord. How did He manifest His divinity to His mother?
- Consider, too, how He consoled His mother after her sufferings.

Then talk with Jesus or His mother, or with the Father. End with the Our Father.

Jesus Christ Consoles His Friends

We continue in the spirit of joy that comes with the realization that our companion Jesus, whom we have accompanied through his life and death, has fulfilled the promise of remaining with us always through the glory of the resurrection. It could be that your joy may be more intense at certain times, and less so at other times. It is not so much that we focus on the *intensity* of our joy, but rather on the form that this joy takes. For example, we may be given tears of joy, and at other times experience a deep peace. The deep peace may be less obvious, but it is a form of consolation in any case - and one which we carry more often in our hearts as we live day to day.

Remember to be attentive to the two points or the divinity shining through the humanity and Jesus coming as consoler

I have attached a special prayer that we will do this week, and in the subsequent weeks. St. Ignatius calls this the *Contemplatio*: The translation is sometimes called the "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love", or "The Contemplation to Increase our Love" or "The Contemplation for Learning to Love Like God Loves". I think that St. Ignatius sees this contemplation as the climax of the Spiritual Exercises in many ways.

It is a recollection of all that has happened during the period of the Exercises, but it also points the way to greater love and service. With the resurrection and glorification of Christ comes the commission of his disciples:

They must love and serve as he has loved and served, and as the community of the believers they become the continuing presence of the Risen Lord in the world. It begins to draw the Exercises to a close but indicates that the Exercises are fundamentally *mission-oriented*. It is a deep, though sometimes difficult prayer. It takes much practice and concentration. Do not be frustrated if at first you find it difficult.

The grace that you seek from God this week is the gift to feel glad and to rejoice intensely, sharing the joy and exultation of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may wish to pray in this way as you pray for this grace:

Lord Jesus, your Father has raised you from death, so that all that you have said and done for me has been fulfilled, and so that all things in my life might become joyful and full of hope. My spirit rejoices in your victory over the power of darkness, and the sun has risen on your new creation. You walk among us, peacefully, in the flesh, now and forever. Come to me, great Lord of Life, as you come to all your friends. Send me to console those around me who need your healing. Let my hands be your hands; my eyes, your eyes; my heart, your heart. Come and send your friends into this world to work and serve full of hope in the Reign of God.

Prayer Materials for this Week:

- 1. The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35):** Are you the unnamed disciple?
- 2. Repetition: The Road to Emmaus**
- 3. Contemplation to Attain Divine Love (1)**

4. Among the Disciples (John 20:19-23)

Imagine that you are one of the disciples. Experience the deep peace that He gives to you.

5. Repetition of 3 or 4

6. Repetition or Summary of the Week

7. Prayer of Intimate Dwelling

Supplementary Meditative Readings:

II Corinthians 5:17-6:2

John 10:31-38

John 16:16-33

Contemplation to Attain Divine Love

At this point in the Exercises, we have become the Disciples of Christ, and his intimate companions. We have journeyed with him to his death, mourned our loss, but we now rejoice in the fullness of the resurrection, which gives new meaning to our companionship and the mystery of the passion. Christ is Lord over death, and even as Lord he remains our companion forever.

In the Spirit, we recognize Christ as Lord, and our gratitude for the salvation we receive through him we express to the Father, who raised him from the dead and glorified him. Just as Christ loves us, and expresses the Father's unlimited love for us, so we grow in love and gratitude. The "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love" is a contemplation which seeks to help us grow in gratitude and love - reviewing all that the Father has done for us through Christ and in the Spirit.

St. Ignatius introduces this contemplation with two observations: First, love shows itself in deeds more than in words. Here he is showing us that our love may be felt deeply, but that it is more important that it be shown in our actions, even if (as in desolation) we do not *feel* loving or loved. Secondly, he notes that it is the nature of love that the lover and beloved are involved in a mutual relationship -- sharing all things (knowledge, riches, and honour). This relationship of mutual self-giving deepens the love between the lover and the beloved. So, although the contemplation is so that our love of God (and also of our neighbour) may increase, it is also a contemplation where we also allow God's love of us to be shown more clearly and to fill our hearts more fully.

St. Ignatius asks us to imagine that we are in the presence of God -- Father, Son, and Spirit. Place yourself before them, in this heavenly place, and notice that you are with all of the angels, and your ancestors who have passed through life before you. These ancestors, you may imagine, are joyful that you are in the presence of the Almighty God, and they are praying for you and with you. Now pray for what you desire in this contemplation: that you might be given an inner knowledge -- a knowledge of the "head" and "heart" -- of all the good things you have received, so that you are moved to great gratitude, and so that you might become able to serve and love God in all things.

St. Ignatius then asks that we divide our contemplation into four parts:

1. The gifts of creation and redemption: Remember all the good things that you have received in your life -- the gift of life itself, the joy of forgiveness and faith, and all of those things which have been special to you as a unique person. On this last point, you may consider the love that you have received from important people in life, the particular opportunities that you have been given, and the joy you have felt at special times in your life. Now reflect, with affection, on how much God has done for you in all of these gifts. See how He has given you even himself in the person of Jesus Christ and the Spirit, who call you to be a close disciple.

Now consider, in light of all this love that God has shown you, how you might respond to His unlimited love. What can you give Him in return? Make him an offering if you feel moved, and with affection make this prayer:

Take, my Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will -- all that I have and possess. You have given all this to me, and I now offer it back to you, for all of it is truly yours. Do with it whatever you will. Give me only your love and your grace, for that is enough for me.

2. Now reflect on how God dwells in all of creation. In God, all of creation exists. The soil, the seas, the rivers, the plants, the animals, the sun and moon, the stars. To all of these he gives life, and to humanity he gave not only life, but created us in His own image. Again, consider how you would respond to this great goodness and love of God. What can you offer Him? You may wish to repeat the prayer above.

3. Now consider how God works for you through all creatures of this great creation. This is the labour of God. In all of creation, he works to bring all things to maturity, and then in the beauty of creation, He reveals himself to you through them. Again, consider how you might respond to this great love and labour of God. Express your feelings, your desire to respond, perhaps using the prayer above.

4. Finally, reflect on how all our gifts -- especially the truly human gifts of justice, mercy, forgiveness, goodness, holiness, etc. come from God. They come to you like the rays of light and warmth comes down from the sun or like the rains pouring from the sky or like water flowing from a fountain. Imagine these gifts coming from God like light or rain. Finish by responding to this great love of God sharing with humanity, and you particularly, these precious divine gifts, and offer to God your deepest desire for gratitude and love, for example by using the prayer above.

Jesus Christ Comes to the Doubters

You continue with your encounter of the Risen Lord, and the grace you seek is the same as last week. Again you may wish to express that desire in terms of the prayer of Fourth Week/2. You may wish to review the guidelines I gave you last week for the "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love", as well as the introductory notes to Fourth Week/2.

Your Prayer Materials for the Week:

1. Jesus and Thomas (John 20:24-29)

Perhaps in this contemplation you imagine yourself as one of the disciples other than Thomas, but your imagination may draw you to be Thomas himself. Take note of this and reflect on your place in the contemplation.

2. Repetition: Jesus and Thomas

3. The Contemplation to Attain Divine Love (2)

4. Jesus on the Shore with Peter (John 21:1-17)

Here, imagine that you are Peter, unless you are moved to be another person in the scene.

5. Repetition of 3 or 4

6. Summary of the Week or Repetition

7. Prayer of Intimate Dwelling

Supplementary Meditative Materials:

Matthew 18:19-20

Galatians 5:1,16-26

Ephesians 4:22-32

Psalm 100

FOURTH WEEK/4

Grace: To be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord

The Risen Lord Shares His Mission

As you continue your relationship with the Risen Lord, try to call to mind your entire journey with him during all the weeks of the Exercises. Where in my life do I see change? Have I developed ways that I find helpful to pray? What have I learned about the way that God moves in my heart? Consider where you are going: How will I respond to the graces I have received in the past months in the way that I hope to live in the future? What concrete ways will I try to live my new love for Christ?

The grace that you seek this week is to be filled with tremendous gratitude, so that you are able to see everything you have and everything that you are as a special gift from the Father, through Christ in their Holy Spirit. You may also wish to ask for the grace to know how best to respond to that great love of God. If you are having difficulties with "The Contemplation to Attain Divine Love" take another look at the guidelines I gave you two weeks ago. Remember that this is a difficult prayer that takes a great deal of patience and practice.

Your Prayer Materials for the Week:

1. Contemplation to Attain Divine Love (3)

2. The Risen Lord at Mount Tabor (Matthew 28:16-20)

3. Repetition: Matthew 28:16-20

4. Contemplation of Other Apparitions of Jesus

(a) Acts 1:3

(b) 1 Corinthians 15:6-8

Remember that whichever you choose of these that you are not doing a meditation, but a contemplation, so make sure that you are there, as a character who is involved in the scene.

5. Repetition: of 1 or 4

6. Repetition or Summary of the Week

7. Prayer of Intimate Dwelling

Supplementary Meditative Materials:

Romans 8:31-39

Colossians 3:1-4

Colossians 3:5-17

1 Peter 3:1-12

1 John 4:7-21

FOURTH WEEK/5

Grace: To be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord

The Risen Lord Hands on His Ministry

Continue to reflect on how you will live your new life in Christ: both the practices you hope to continue for the growth of your interior life, as well as the response you would wish to make in your daily life of service and love of others. Be grateful for the gift of the Spiritual Exercises, and remember that this is a personal gift of God, which he gives to us through His Son Jesus Christ in the love of the Holy Spirit. It is a gift that we do not possess for ourselves.

We are always concerned about our own relationship to God, but that relationship and the gift of the Exercises is always directed outwards: The Exercises are significant to you as you personally grow and mature in your faith, but they are also significant to those people that you love, and those people whom God wishes to touch through your witness to His great love. Look for the face of Christ in your neighbour. The Risen Christ - our companion of his public ministry and his passion - is with us until the end of time. Let us break bread with one another, especially with those who are most hungry, and recognize the presence of Christ among us!

The grace that you seek this week is the gift living the joy of the Risen Christ, and to live grateful for all that is in your life, your world, your past, your present, your future. The special gift that you seek is to let that gratitude bring you a deeper desire to bring the Good News to others in all that you do.

Prayer Materials for the Week:

1. The Contemplation to Attain Divine Love (4)

2. Jesus' Interaction with Jesus and the Beloved Disciple (John 21:18-23)

Remember that the beloved disciple could be John or yourself. What is the openness that Jesus is calling for?

3. Repetition of 1 or 2

4. The Ascension (Acts:1:1-12)

5. Repetition of the Ascension

6. Summary of the Week or Repetition

7. Prayer of Intimate Dwelling